GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1214
ANSWERED ON:07.12.2015
Trade Negotiating Committee of BIMSTEC
Charitra Shri Ram

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

a) whether the trade negotiating committee of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multispectral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is likely to meet in near future after a gap of four years to revive the languishing proposal for a free trade agreement;

b) if so, the details thereof;

c) whether BIMSTEC has been an under performer as the same countries are also engaged under more vibrant groupings such as the SAARC, ASEAN and RCEP and if so, the details thereof; and

d) the manner in which the group nations are considering to stress that BIMSTEC is different from all other groups and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)
(a) and (b): The Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) met in September, 2015. The last meeting of the TNC was held in February 2011. This September,2015 meeting was called in the background of the Third BIMSTEC Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar in March, 2014, where the Leaders directed the BIMSTEC TNC to expedite its work.
(c) and (d): BIMSTEC is a regional Organization comprising the seven Member States in the Bay of Bengal region. The BIMSTEC region brings together 1.5 billion people- 22% of world population and a combined GDP of over US $ 2.5 trillion. BIMSTEC constitutes a bridge between South and South-East Asia with five Members from South Asia namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka and two from South-East Asia namely Myanmar and Thailand. BIMSTEC has identified 14 priority areas where a member country takes lead, such as transport & communication, tourism, environment & disaster management, public health, people-to-people contacts and counter terrorism & transnational crime etc. A number of initiatives have been taken in these identified areas of cooperation by the member countries.

***